

# Gardening

## NEWSLETTER

CITY OF SAN RAMON COMMUNITY GARDENS

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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**Stephanie Herscu**  
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**Central Contra Costa Solid Waste  
Authority Home Composting  
Workshops**  
(925) 906-1801  
[www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org)

**Please be our eyes and ears  
and advise us of any immediate  
problems.**

To reach Public Services after hours  
to report an emergency or need for  
immediate repair, such as a broken  
water line, please call police dispatch,  
(925) 973-2779, and they will contact  
our standby staff.

### VOLUNTEER GARDENING OPPORTUNITIES

#### CROW CANYON DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

Tuesdays, 9:00am – 11:00am ♦ 105 Park Place

Join our Public Services team and help maintain the organic demonstration gardens at Crow Canyon Gardens City Park. Enjoy lots of fresh air and exercise as you accomplish tasks that may include composting bins and maintenance, planting, weed pulling/hoeing, hand pruning/trimming, removing spent plants, raking pathways, adding compost or mulch, watering, dividing perennials. Meet by the greenhouse gate. Please wear work clothes, closed toed shoes, sun protection and bring work gloves and a water bottle. For more information about this program and to sign-up, please contact **Bonnie Mertz** at [bmertz@sanramon.ca.gov](mailto:bmertz@sanramon.ca.gov) or, (925) 973-2608. Volunteers must be 16+ years or older and registered with our City Lights Volunteer Program. If you are not currently registered, please visit our website at [www.citylights.volunteerhub.com](http://www.citylights.volunteerhub.com) for an application.



#### VOLUNTEER LANDSCAPE ASSISTANT

Wednesdays, March 14 – October 31 ♦ 9:00am – 11:00am

Forest Home Farms Historic Park, 19953 San Ramon Valley Blvd.



In the shade of the historic buildings and majestic oaks, cedars and redwood trees join the Parks Department maintenance staff with maintenance activities that enhance this 16 acre National Historic Site and City Park. Activities may include planting, pruning, watering, leaf clean-up, irrigation installation, painting and fence repair, weeding, plant propagation, and creek restoration. Volunteers must be age 16+ to participate. Please wear work clothes, closed toed shoes, sun protection and bring work gloves and a water bottle. This is a drop in program, registration is not required. If you have questions, please contact **Sharon Peterson** at (925) 973-3284 or email [speterson@sanramon.ca.gov](mailto:speterson@sanramon.ca.gov).

#### PARKS MAKE LIFE BETTER

Saturday, September 22, 9:00am – 12:00pm ♦ Central Park, 12501 Alcosta Blvd.

The City of San Ramon is home to 54 beautiful parks that San Ramon residents are proud of, and that thousands of people enjoy each week. Join our professional park maintenance staff for a cleanup event to assist the City in maintaining neighborhood parks. Tasks may include planting, pruning, applying mulch, replacing sand box materials, painting and general cleanup. The event is open to all ages however children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Volunteers are asked to wear work clothes, closed toed shoes, sun protection and bring work gloves and water bottle. Please register in advance on line at [www.citylights.volunteerhub.com](http://www.citylights.volunteerhub.com) or contact **Bonnie Mertz** at [bmertz@sanramon.ca.gov](mailto:bmertz@sanramon.ca.gov) or (925) 973-2608.

## THE MANY BENEFITS OF GARDENING

**M**any people think of gardening as a chore. Others take up gardening as a hobby. Still there are others who could not even begin to give a proper definition of the term gardening. Whether you love gardens and gardening or you hate even the idea of lifting up a shovel, know that gardening offers many benefits to those who are willing to try gardening.



The act of gardening goes back thousands of years. If gardens are beautiful to look at, imagine the pride and sense of accomplishment that the creator of such beauty can feel. Besides that, gardening is a great way to reduce stress, get a bit of exercise, be creative, and develop patience.

Numerous studies have been undertaken which show that gardening offers many health related benefits. The most obvious benefit of gardening is that it can be a great way to relieve stress. The hustle and bustle of everyday life is difficult to avoid. Work, family obligations, and social engagements are just some of the things that take up chunks of peoples' lives. With so much going on, many people simply forget to make time to relax and do the things they enjoy. Growing a garden requires both an investment of time and attention. Planning the garden and then caring for the garden offers the gardener a simple and inexpensive way to unwind and relax. Gardening can help a person clear the mind. Gardening allows the participant to refocus their attention on the creation.

### NEED YOUR HELP!

**Would you like to share a gardening tip with your fellow community gardeners?**

Have you been successful with a certain method of eliminating pests or favor a particular organic method? You may be able to help others reap beautiful, healthy crops by sharing your experiences, tips, methods or ideas through the next newsletter or with a presentation at our next garden meeting. Would you like to be the Gardener highlighted in the next newsletter? If so, please contact Louise Weber at [lweber@sanramon.ca.gov](mailto:lweber@sanramon.ca.gov), or (925) 973-3255.

Another health related benefit of gardening is that when people tend to their gardens, they are getting exercise. Even an activity as simple as gardening can contribute towards weight loss. Any physical activity that gets the heart beating faster is better for the body than no activity at all. Gardening gets a person outdoors, exposed to natural air, and refocused on a pleasant activity.

Gardening also offers nutritional benefits to those who choose to plant a vegetable garden. Creating a vegetable garden is a way of ensuring that there is a continuous supply of fresh vegetables to consume. Vegetable gardeners know exactly where their produce is coming from and they also know exactly what chemicals were used to grow the produce. Eating more vegetables, and especially home-grown vegetables, is a simple way to ensure that a body is getting a proper balance of vitamins and nutrients.

And finally, some studies even report that people who are exposed to gardens and gardening recover more quickly from illnesses. It seems that for many people, gardening is just what the doctor ordered.



Gardening can be a creative experience as well. It's one thing to throw some seeds down and then wait to see what grows. While gardening does not require that the participant have a degree in landscape architecture, a bit of planning will go a long way towards enhancing the beauty and the gardening experience overall.

And finally, the act of gardening teaches people the art of being patient. Unlike other activities, gardening does not produce instantaneous results. As such, a person who takes up gardening must wait for their rewards. The garden should be planned to a certain degree. Once a basic plan has been developed, the land needs to be prepared. Next, the gardener will plant the seeds or plants. But that's not all. In order to achieve a healthy, bountiful supply of plants, the garden needs constant monitoring. Weeds must be pulled and insect activity must be curtailed. Then, one day, they'll appear - the fruits of your labor. Cut the flowers and vegetables, bring them inside and enjoy the sense of accomplishment that is gained from the benefit-rich activity called gardening!

*Reprinted from [www.londonancestor.com/hobby/gardening.htm](http://www.londonancestor.com/hobby/gardening.htm)*

## 14 Simple Gardening Tips and Tricks

1. To remove the salt deposits that form on clay pots, combine equal parts white vinegar, rubbing alcohol and water in a spray bottle. Apply the mixture to the pot and scrub with a plastic brush. Let the pot dry before you plant anything in it.
2. To prevent accumulating dirt under your fingernails while you work in the garden, draw your fingernails across a bar of soap and you'll effectively seal the undersides of your nails so dirt can't collect beneath them. Then, after you've finished in the garden, use a nailbrush to remove the soap and your nails will be sparkling clean.
3. To prevent the line on your string trimmer from jamming or breaking, treat with a spray vegetable oil before installing it in the trimmer.
4. Turn a long-handled tool into a measuring stick! Lay a long-handled garden tool on the ground, and next to it place a tape measure. Using a permanent marker, write inch and foot marks on the handle. When you need to space plants a certain distance apart (from just an inch to several feet) you'll already have a measuring device in your hand.
5. To have garden twine handy when you need it, just stick a ball of twine in a small clay pot, pull the end of the twine through the drainage hole, and set the pot upside down in the garden. Do that, and you'll never go looking for twine again.
6. Little clay pots make great cloches for protecting young plants from sudden, overnight frosts and freezes.
7. To turn a clay pot into a hose guide, just stab a roughly one-foot length of steel reinforcing bar into the ground at the corner of a bed and slip two clay pots over it: one facing down, the other facing up. The guides will prevent damage to your plants as you drag the hose along the bed.
8. To create perfectly natural markers, write the names of plants (using a permanent marker) on the flat faces of stones of various sizes and place them at or near the base of your plants.
9. Got aphids? You can control them with a strong blast of water from the hose or with insecticidal soap. But here's another suggestion, one that's a lot more fun: get some tape! Wrap a wide strip of tape around your hand, sticky side out, and pat the leaves of plants infested with aphids. Concentrate on the undersides of leaves, because that's where the little buggers like to hide.
10. The next time you boil or steam vegetables, don't pour the water down the drain, use it to water potted patio

plants, and you'll be amazed at how the plants respond to the "vegetable soup".

11. Use leftover tea and coffee grounds to acidify the soil of acid-loving plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, gardenias and even blueberries. A light sprinkling of about one-quarter of an inch applied once a month will keep the pH of the soil on the acidic side.
12. Use chamomile tea to control damping-off fungus, which often attacks young seedlings quite suddenly. Just add a spot of tea to the soil around the base of seedlings once a week or use it as a foliar spray.
13. If you need an instant table for tea service, look no farther than your collection of clay pots and saucers. Just flip a good-sized pot over, and top it off with a saucer. And when you've had your share of tea, fill the saucer with water and your "table" is now a birdbath.
14. The quickest way in the world to dry herbs: just lay a sheet of newspaper on the seat of your car, arrange the herbs in a single layer, then roll up the windows and close the doors. Your herbs will be quickly dried to perfection. What's more, your car will smell great.



*Reprinted from [www.hgtv.com/gardening](http://www.hgtv.com/gardening)*

### UPCOMING NORTH & SOUTH GARDEN MEETING

Thursday, October 25, 2012 at 6:00 PM

**Location of meeting: Alcosta Senior & Community Center @ 9300 Alcosta Blvd., San Ramon, CA 94583**

Please plan to attend! We may start making it mandatory that gardeners attend at least one meeting each year. We find that the same few gardeners come each time and there are many issues brought up that ALL gardeners should be at the meetings to be made aware of or discuss. This is especially true with new gardeners.

In between our quarterly meetings with all gardeners, when issues arise at your garden site, feel free to have meetings with your fellow gardeners to discuss these issues of concern on your own.

## POLICY & COMMON COURTESY REMINDERS:

- Please keep the pathway around your allotment weeded (North & South Gardens) and covered with chips (North Garden only) to discourage weeds from returning.
- Please do not use treated wood for anything in your allotment. Chemicals from the wood can be leached into the soil.
- Please remember that **both the North & South Gardens are Organic Garden** – please refer to the Community Garden Policies – entry #1 under Gardening Method Policies.
- Please only use organic fertilizer – **Miracle grow** is not organic.
- North Garden - Please share the manure with your fellow north gardeners – do not store manure in your allotment!
- As a courtesy to other gardeners, please coil hoses back up when you are done with them.
- Please coil the hose next to the spigot – not around the spigot. This makes it easier for the next gardener to stretch the hose to the location they desire.
- Please do not put dirt in the green waste can. For the North Garden – if you fill the green waste can, please move the can to the curb to the right of the entrance (as you're coming in) to the parking lot. Pickup is Tuesday.
- North Garden – there are 2 controls on most water spigots – one is for the amount of flow and the other is for on/off. The one for the amount of flow is often turned all the way on which increases the leaking and turns the flow into power washing. If you turn it up, please turn it back down for the next gardener.
- North Garden – Over by the garden shed there will be a designated area where unused and available building material can be placed. Any gardener may use what they need. So that this area doesn't become a permanent pile that begins to look like junk, items left for more than three months will be disposed.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Does the City of San Ramon provide water?

**A:** Yes. As individual water use is not metered, we ask each gardener to conserve water. All hoses used in the community gardens must be equipped with shut-off nozzles. To encourage water conservation, GARDENERS ARE REQUIRED TO STAY IN THE VICINITY OF THEIR ALLOTMENT WHILE WATERING, DRIP SYSTEMS INCLUDED. After watering your garden, please make sure the water is turned off and the hoses are coiled neatly near the faucets. We understand drip irrigation is more time consuming; however, it is imperative that you remain on site and not tie up hoses/resources; be kind to your fellow gardeners. PLEASE DO NOT WATER OTHER GARDENERS' ALLOTMENTS UNLESS YOU ARE ASKED TO DO SO.

**Q:** When does the rental renewal process begin?

**A:** According to the terms of your Use Agreement, your rental period terminates on December 1, 2012. All current allotment holders should receive a renewal packet in November. If you plan on renewing the rental of your allotment, you would need to do so prior to November 30, 2012. Open enrollment for new gardeners will begin on December 3.

## ANNOUNCEMENT:

### CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY HOME COMPOSTING FOR BUSY PEOPLE WORKSHOPS:

Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek  
Vermicompost & Bin Building

September 8, 2012 ♦ 10:00am – 12:00pm

Orchard Nursery, 4010 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette  
Composting & Vermicompost

September 15, 2012 ♦ 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Visit [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) or call (925) 906-1801 x 306 to reserve your spot for these workshops.

## THE BEST WAY TO REACH THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

**T**he best way to reach our maintenance staff with your requests or questions is to go to [www.sanramon.ca.gov](http://www.sanramon.ca.gov) and click on "contact us." Fill in your information where indicated; problem, topic, description, and your contact information. Then press "send," and your correspondence is on its way to our maintenance department. Any citizen can

request maintenance, repairs, or advise us of a problem. All requests are reviewed and monitored daily and cannot be lost in the system. Each is automatically assigned to the staff responsible for that particular topic. Each of your questions, requests or issues will receive a response from one of our maintenance staff.